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AUTHOR Robinson, Jack
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ABSTRACT

Faculty members' reactions to constructing and evaluating course portfolios were examined, and how that process might be improved was explored as part of an annual evaluation of teaching. Three college departments (sociology, accounting, and dental hygiene and assisting) volunteered to use portfolio review in the 1991-92 school year. In all, 22 faculty members from these departments were interviewed about the portfolio development process (approximately 53 to 64 percent of the faculty members in each department). Overall, the portfolio development process did not work well. Most faculty members felt that they did not get anything out of constructing the course portfolios, that the portfolios did not capture their ideas about teaching, and that making judgments about the portfolios for evaluation purposes was difficult. Faculty members generally thought that the criteria were not explicit enough to use for faculty evaluation. Anytime a department chooses to conduct a portfolio review, it must recognize the time-consuming nature of the portfolio construction and evaluation process. Some suggestions are made for implementing course portfolios without using them for accountability purposes too early in the process. (SLD)

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Faculty Orientations Toward Teaching and the Use of Teaching Portfolios for Evaluating and Improving University-Level Instruction

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by

Jack Robinson
Old Dominion University

Much recent attention has been directed toward the use of teaching portfolios as a means of evaluating and improving university-level instruction. Seldin (1993a) notes that in the past four years the number of institutions using some form of portfolio review has risen from ten to over 400 and that it is used in settings as diverse as the University of Maryland, Ball State University, Texas A&M University, Miami-Dade Community College, Columbia College in South Carolina, Harvard University, and Dalhousie University in Canada. The American Association of Higher Education (AAHE) as part of " The Teaching Initiative" project promotes the use of teaching portfolio as a means of capturing the complexities of teaching, of placing the responsibility for evaluating teaching in the hands of faculty, of prompting more reflective practice and improvement, and of fostering a culture of teaching and new discourse about it (Edgerton, Hutchings & Quinlan, 1991). Teaching portfolios are advocated by Seldin (1991) as a means of documenting the quality of teaching performance while preserving the complexity and individuality of teaching and of providing evidence equivalent to that provided in evaluating the quality of research for tenure and promotion decisions. While not without flaws, he sees portfolio review as the best alternative we currently have for representing a faculty members quality of teaching.

The impetus for the use of teaching portfolios has come from several sources. The need to improve undergraduate education in response to changes in higher education (Green,1990) and the demand for greater faculty accountability (Seldin, 1990) have prompted the need to find a better way to improve teaching and at the same time document or make a case for effective teaching. Changes in perspectives on what constitutes scholarship (Boyer, 1990) and the manner in which effective teaching evolves through reflective processes (Shulman, 1989) have motivated the use of teaching portfolios as a context specific means of displaying the transformational processes and products of the evolving craft of teaching.

The present study sought to examine faculty members' reactions

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to constructing and evaluating course portfolios and how that process might be improved as part of an annual evaluation of teaching. As faculty members from three departments in the university were interviewed about their initial experiences with portfolio construction and evaluation, serious questions arouse as to whether portfolio review will work as a system of accountability or improvement. They questioned whether portfolio construction and review could capture their ideas about effective teaching or be of sufficient benefit for improving their teaching to justify the amount of time required for constructing and reviewing them.

BACKGROUND TO THE PRESENT STUDY

My interest in the use of teaching portfolios started in 1989 as a result of participating in a faculty senate committee that sought to improve the university's existing system of teacher evaluation. The committee reviewed several articles and books focusing on the evaluation and improvement of teaching and recommended that peer review of course portfolios be conducted annually as a means of evaluation supplementary to that provided by student ratings. Our recommendation was based on the idea that while student ratings could be justified as valid and reliable measures of student instructional needs, course portfolios would better reflect the appropriateness of the intellectual demands of the course and what faculty did to help students meet those demands.

Following approval by the faculty senate and central administration, a second committee used suggestions from Witman and Weiss (1982) as guidelines for developing the course portfolio review process. Course portfolios were to be evaluated annually in each department and were to contain information on teaching responsibilities, grade distributions given in courses, course syllabi, handouts, assignments, materials used, activities, and exams. Also, portfolios were to contain a discussion of the means by which faculty helped students meet the intellectual demands of the course and evidence to support those claims. The entire effort was initiated, sponsored, reviewed and approved by the faculty senate with support from central administration.

THE PRESENT STUDY

Three departments volunteered to use portfolio review during the fall and spring semesters of the 1991-1992 academic year. I initially contacted the department chairs from each department to get approval to conduct interviews with their faculty. Subsequent to that approval I selected a systematic sample of faculty members in the department (every nth faculty member) from the university phone directory. However, some of those faculty selected were on leave, others had left, and other key faculty members emerged from the interviewing process. Key faculty members included individuals who had chaired or participated on committees examining the peer review process or were untenured. In all, 22 faculty were interviewed. In selecting these faculty I consciously attempted to

insure that they were representative of different groups, tenured verses nontenured, male verses female, and held different ranks in the department. I then contacted each faculty member to set up what I thought would be a 45 minute to one hour interview. In actuality, many of the interviews lasted from 45 minutes to two hours. In setting up the interviews I indicated that my purpose was three fold: to do personal research, to collect information that might be useful for a pending pre-proposal, and to find out how they were working for possible recommendations for modifying the portfolio review process. Of the 23 faculty members contacted only one refused to participate. In all, 53% to 64% of the faculty members in each department were interviewed.

At the beginning of each interview I again explained the purpose of the interview, assured each faculty member of anonymity, and requested that the interview be tape recorded. Three faculty members declined to have the interviews recorded but were comfortable with notes being taken and offered to clarify any questions later. All tapes were replayed and field notes reread. Tapped and written interviews were then either fully transcribed or significant portions transcribed by myself. Faculty members' concerns and perceptions were very apparent from the interview process. However, making sense of them and interpreting what went wrong came from reviewing recent literature and attending the recent national symposium held in San Antonio Texas on portfolio review.

Questions explored in the interviews

A central focus of the interviews was to find out how important teaching was to faculty, what faculty members did that they considered good or effective teaching, whether they felt that came out in the portfolio review process, and if they felt they could or should evaluate peers' portfolios. The following questions were used in the interview process. The questions used were modified from an initial set of questions as interviews were conducted in response to faculty members concerns about accountability issues and the utility of the portfolio review process. The wording of each question is approximate as questions were slightly modified, further explained or expanded on during the interview process.

1a. How did you become a professor?
1b. Personally, to what degree is teaching important to you?
1c. Professionally, to what degree do you think teaching is important?
2a. What do you think about when you think about good teaching?
2b. How do you think that is best accomplished?
2c. What do you do to accomplish that?
3a. What did you include in your portfolios and why?
3b. How much time was spent preparing it?

3c. How much time would it take you to revise your portfolio for future use?
4a. Did portfolio review cause you to reflect on what you do to be an effective teacher?
4b. Did it generate or call to mind questions to explore?
4c. Did you change anything as a result of constructing your portfolio?
4d. Do you feel that portfolio review captured what you think about when you think about good teaching?
5a. Did peers or a committee review your portfolio? What happened?
5b. What was emphasized?
5c. What was your reaction to peer or committee comments?
5d. How did this tie into your personal definition of good teaching?
6a. What is your department's orientation toward teaching?
7a. How should portfolios be evaluated?
7b. Could you evaluate a peer's portfolio?
7c. How comfortable would you feel evaluating peer's portfolios?
8a. Can portfolios portray an overall picture of teaching effectiveness?
8b. Can preparing portfolios help improve teaching?
9a. Was portfolio construction and/or evaluation practical?
9b. Was portfolio construction and/or evaluation worthwhile?

Some methodological concerns

Before presenting the findings some methodological concerns need to be addressed. One is the relationship of the author to faculty being interviewed and whether the dialogue that occurred was candid. As I am not in any kind of administrative position and mainly associated with the faculty senate as a colleague, the interviews should not have been threatening to the faculty member. However, I am associated with advancing the use of portfolios as a means of evaluation, and therefore concerned that faculty might be reserved in their responses. Frankly, as faculty discussed the idea of using portfolio review I was apologized to a lot, usually in the context of "sorry but I don't think this is a good idea". They also indicated that what was said on tape had to be confidential otherwise they did not see any point to the interviews. As representativeness of the faculty participating was not a major concern as I was more interested in gaining insight into their reactions to the portfolio review process, nevertheless, the faculty participating appeared to be reasonably representative of faculty in these departments.

Another contextual concern is the general level of teaching in these departments. All three departments value and view themselves as good teaching departments. In the case of two of these departments there is objective information to support effective teaching claims. The department (school) of Dental Hygiene and

Dental Assisting has for some years received the highest scores on the national boards for a department of its type not associated with a dental school. The Accounting department has passing rates on the CPA exam equivalent to those of the two top academic schools in the state despite the fact that the university accepts a fairly average student. A student from that program received exceptional recognition this past year for obtaining the highest score in the country on the CPA exam. The sociology department is generally recognized in its college and on campus as a very good teaching department.

FINDINGS

Reasons for becoming a professor

Faculty members varied greatly in terms of how they came to be professors. Some simply "stumbled into it", others "liked the life style", and still others "had aspired to be teachers since they were 7 years old". A common thread that ran through most of these conversations was that once these individuals had been in a situation where they had taught they became "hooked on teaching". Several of the faculty members interviewed indicated that they had given up and continue to give up much higher paying jobs in business and the public sector because they liked teaching and made enough money to be comfortable.

Personal importance of teaching

Faculty personally viewed teaching as "very important" to "extremely important" or in some cases said "it's my life". In general most faculty verbally ascribed a great deal of personal importance to teaching. A number of faculty members indicated that they liked doing research and some saw teaching and research as commingled processes. However, they all ranked teaching as most important personally compared to research and service.

Professional importance of teaching

When asked if they felt teaching was important for professional advancement and rewards most said that "it wasn't". Research and acquiring grants were viewed as the major means of getting rewards, tenure and promotion. However, they did see teaching as an very important priority in their departments and expressed the idea that good, not fair, teaching was expected. Anything less than that would be unacceptable for tenure and promotion and would affect salary decisions negatively. With the exception of a few faculty members, they did not view effective or good teaching as being rewarded professionally. Only if teaching was substandard could it have an effect, and then only a negative one. Faculty members of all three departments viewed their departments as placing a high priority on research and grants.

Definitions of good teaching

When I initially started this research I expected to find at least some faculty stressing acquiring content knowledge as their primary goal in teaching. What I found was concern by faculty members interviewed for developing students' understanding, perspectives, attitudes, critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, and problem approach behaviors. Also, a number of faculty members indicated that helping students in their personal and professional growth was an important goal of theirs. Faculty members thought that these goals were best accomplished in a variety of ways. In fact, there were 22 different styles of teaching which could not be easily characterized. Some styles of teaching revolved around a few orientations toward teaching, others were very eclectic. What follows is a description of parts of some of those. Pseudonyms were chosen as a way of characterizing the different styles of teaching I observed.

The applied realist was someone who continually used concrete and humorous stories, metaphors and analogies to make the concepts he was teaching more accessible to students. He did this in the kinds of ways students would be expected to use it in analogous real life situations while associating positive affect with the cognitive learning. I should mention here that he never used technical educational jargon to explain what he was doing and that I had to keep questioning him in order to formulate my ideas about what he was doing.

The applied realist felt good teaching was a matter of "entertaining as well as educating" and keeping students "focused on what it is you're doing" and thought that was best accomplished by using "humor". When I explored what he meant by that I found that he continually captured general principles of what he was teaching in humorous stories. For example he related how "good businesses to control and protect their assets have what's called a system of internal control" and how going to the movie theater where your ticket is torn up so that it can't be resold demonstrates that principle. He then went on to relate how he told a story to his students about totally embarrassing his wife at a high school football game by insisting that the ticket taker tear up the ticket while several people waited in line. His point to his students was "they should be seeing and noticing these kinds of things in their everyday lives". The humorous stories he told were used to cue students to remember those principles. He constantly related textbook principles to practical real life situations. He was always looking for new ways to get information across using concrete real life situations. Another example he used was how it was difficult for first year students to grasp the concept of estimating dollar values of unfinished products in continuous process manufacturing. He related that he had read an article where a professor had students use tinker toys in an assembly line process in class and then had them stop and go through the process

of estimating dollar values of unfinished products. He hadn't tried it yet but then pointed to a hugh box of tinker toys setting on his file cabinet.

The reflective practitioner constantly thought through what she did in her courses, why, how it worked, and reviewed and revised what she did in the context of educational and adult learning theory. She could easily articulate what she did and why.

The reflective practitioner when discussing effective teaching said "I work very, very hard to make class interesting; I never just lecture, I use lots of different media; we like to discuss and use lots of interaction and activity, what we call adult learning strategies, I try very hard to incorporate those into my classes". When asked how she thought that was best accomplished she replied "I think it all starts with preparation. I don't think there's many good teachers who just get up and talk off the cuff. I think it takes preparation, especially if your going to have good interaction. If you want your students to do group activities you have to plan in advance for this stuff, you need objectives-how are they going to accomplish these objectives, unless your model of good teaching is just spitting out information all the time, which I don't think is good teaching". I then asked, so preparation is one thing? She responded, "preparation, variety, being open to students ideas and students' viewpoints, not taking the role of I am the boss, its going to be my way no matter what. If I am in front of the class it needs to be an opportunity for exchange, for the students and the professor. I think that makes good teaching, you have to be willing to do that in the classroom-relinquish control". Later when discussing preparing portfolios she went on to say "I think about what I am doing and why every time before I do my lecture, which is why I am always updating my course portfolio. Having to write down that I am doing it or I am not doing it, to me personally is a waste of time-its redundant-for people who don't update or write down what they do it might have more value".

The perspective taker sought to challenge, expand and enrich the ways students view things. Also, she focused on developing the students' skills in assessing and processing information.

The perspective taker when asked about what she considered good teaching said: "I am probably a little different in how I define good teaching. To me, to be a good teacher you have to be a good researcher. The person who has never done research but just repeats what other people say may be entertaining, but won't necessarily have the incentive to keep up. They may not have the knowledge, the most recent cutting edge knowledge, won't have the experiences. I can talk about culture shock because I go through it every summer when I go to .... I can talk about things because I do them, I can talk about genealogies because I do them. One of

the things to be a truly good teacher, not necessarily an entertaining one, but a good one where students actually learn the material and really understand the discipline, you have to be a good researcher". When I asked how she accomplished this she said: "I show slides from my field work, I show examples of things in the book and relate them to my own research and how I experienced it and I give examples of what it's like if you have more than one wife, like in polygamous societies. I talk about how people interact and deal with things like co-wife jealousies and chores and competition. So I try to use examples from my own experience. When I try to get them to see what it's like to have a different culture or religion I show them slides of a ritual. I show lots of slides of my field work, talk about it from the perspective of the Indians not from an outsider or ...(academic discipline). We discuss cultural relativity, so that students can get a feeling that this is meaningful or right or correct to natives just as much as their Christianity may be to the students. I think research is absolutely critical to being a good teacher". She also mentioned developing critical thinking skills and when I asked her how she did this she said: "I give them different perspectives and I develop each perspective--conflicting ones and then I ask them how do we decide which one has the most data to support it? Which one is valid? So I make them go through the thinking process of choosing. What are the problems of this one, of that one? How do we settle the issue?" She went on to relate "In my upper division courses I have them read books that are totally opposed, then I have them write a paper on why they are choosing different types of data like in one book, and other types of data in another book, to discuss the same point. I make sure the books are discussing the same issue but coming from different theoretical perspectives so they see the influence of one's theoretical orientation on what one considers valid and what one considers evidence".

I found this attention to developing perspectives through demonstrations and discussions in a number of interviews. All the faculty members I interviewed were concerned with teaching students ways of approaching and analyzing information. They might accomplish this through dialoguing, debating, written or computer exercises, case studies, games, or intellectual modelling. None of the faculty members interviewed saw effective teaching as just a matter of conveying information.

I did not find any easy categorical way of characterizing the problem solver. The best way to describe it was that he used a mix of ways to approach the problems that arise in teaching. These approaches did not seem to come from three or four central tenants about teaching but rather from a very eclectic and pragmatic orientation. He focused on developing understanding and tried to relate what he did in the classroom to real life situations students would face. Much of the information on what he did came out after prolonged questioning about his ideas about good teaching.

The problem solver indicated that he was currently teaching a televised course and spending about 35 hours a week teaching and developing that course. He saw learning to teach on interactive television as important because he saw that as a new focus of the university and he thought a couple of articles might come out of it. He went on to say "there are a lot of differences (teaching on TV), you really have two audiences. You have the students and then you have the channel flippers because it's going out over ...(a cable network) and not that you worry about them except for the fact that they will be evaluating ODU based on what they're looking at, and they're not sitting there taking notes like the students are, and when you talk slow and they've just been listing to CBS news or something else and it looks like-oh boy that's way they teach at ODU. So I've been experimenting with different things in the course that doesn't come across on cable as poorly as it might come across in the classroom even though you're doing an excellent job with the students". When I asked about these things he went on to relate how, when students were taking notes, that instead of slowing down as he would usually do, he would repeat himself or use "fill in" information that students didn't need to take notes on. He also noted that students could tape these presentations and take them home and replay them, especially if they encountered difficultly understanding some of the ideas presented. He was currently struggling with the problem of interaction and students asking questions because of the intimidation of appearing on interactive TV. His goals in teaching were to take students to a much higher level of understanding, have them enjoy the course, teach a rigorous course and have students learn a little more about the environment that they would be working in. When asked how he did this he remarked that the "basics" were easily gotten from the textbook but that these ideas needed to be related to real life work experiences and what actually happens. He might use "cases" or work situations to develop ideas or explain to students how comments they could expect on their evaluations in work related situations should be interpreted. He was currently putting together an advanced seminar course where students would argue a point with another student as in a court of law. Both points of view could be supported equally and the judge would be a member of a local business firm with whom they might seek employment later.

What happened when portfolios were constructed and reviewed?

Basically, it did not work. For the majority of faculty members, across all three departments, when I asked faculty if they got anything out of constructing course portfolios for the evaluation process they said "no". When I asked whether the portfolios had captured their ideas about teaching they said "it didn't". When I asked what questions or ideas it had generated-"it hadn't". When I asked if they could judge differences in quality, most said they "couldn't". They viewed most differences that they had observed as a matter of "style". While some faculty members

felt they could judge differences in quality, almost all faculty felt uncomfortable or very uncomfortable making those judgements for evaluative purposes. Constructing portfolios did cause faculty members to think about the content and requirements in their courses against departmental standards, but these concerns were not tied to their personal definitions of effective teaching. Only a few faculty members reported any benefit from putting course portfolios together in this sense, and these tended to be faculty members who had written some reflective thoughts about what their objectives were, what they did to accomplish those and how that was reflected in their course portfolios. However, even those individuals did not feel that it captured their ideas about effective teaching. What happened in each of the departments might be informative.

In the accounting department faculty portfolios were reviewed by an undergraduate and graduate committee depending on the level of the course. Faculty were to submit their course syllabi, handouts, materials used in the course, course grade distributions, assignments and exams. They did not submit reflections on their philosophies of teaching, objectives or any discussion of what they did in their courses to accomplish those objectives. The major use of the portfolio review process was to insure that each course covered what it was supposed to according to the departmental syllabi for the course and meet certain departmental concerns. These departmental concerns focused on the appropriate use of computers and the level and types of assignments and exams used. Committees checked courses against departmental syllabi and examined portfolios for these departmental concerns. They also checked very closely whether what was on exams coincided with what was taught in the course. Evaluative comments then tended to address these issues, but only if the faculty member was deficient in some area. As a couple of faculty members commented "you have to understand that accountants are used to looking for what's wrong. If everything is okay then they don't say anything". Most faculty were found to be teaching up to the departmental standards but deficient in some areas. Faculty did not find these comments helpful or relevant to their personal definitions of effective teaching. In most cases the criticisms resulted more from the faculty member failing to adequately explain what they were doing in their course portfolios.

In the dental hygiene department all faculty members keep portfolios and have been doing so for more than five years. Their portfolios contain everything they use in the class: syllabi, objectives, handouts, materials used, assignments, tests, lecture notes, overheads, etc. The typical portfolio is from six inches to a foot thick. They are not expected to be typed or kept in a neat or formal manner. In fact, that is discouraged. They are kept for three reasons. One is so that if someone else new to teaching the course needs to get started they have something to work from. The second reason, reported by all the faculty interviewed in that

department, was "for myself". Faculty members found portfolios to be a good base from which to work. They continually used them to organize themselves, provide a basis for thinking about their teaching and a depository for ideas and assignments. The third reason is so that they can be used by the department chair for evaluating teaching. The portfolios did not contain a statement of teaching philosophy or any reflective statements relating objectives to what is done in the class, or relate these to evidence of student learning. As some faculty members commented "it's all there you can see for yourself" and saw writing that out as "a waste of time" or "busy work". When faculty members were asked whether they got anything from the portfolio review process they said they did not, outside of maybe re-examining whether they had varied courses enough. They did that kind of thinking and reviewing throughout the year as they taught their courses and interacted with students. Using portfolios as part of an evaluation process did not stimulate much additional reflective thinking about their teaching, and did not capture the rich differences in their individual styles of teaching.

The sociology department included course syllabi, materials and assignments, readings, objectives, exams and reflective statements relating their objectives to what they did in the course and what they asked of students on exams and assignments. A committee was formed before the process was started to examine guidelines for portfolio preparation and evaluation. After the department had gone through the portfolio review process, another committee evaluated how to revise the process. Course portfolios were reviewed by a committee of peers with all faculty members in the department serving as a member of a three to five person committee for each portfolio reviewed. As this was a trial run, faculty members agreed to only give comments back to the individual faculty member and there was a tacit agreement not to be overly critical. Some faculty members found the reflective part useful and reported that it helped them clarify "vague" ideas they had about teaching and reflect on what they were doing. They also reported getting some good ideas from reviewing other peoples portfolios. In some cases they said it helped them see the level of expectation in other courses and some reported that it was "inspiring" to see what other faculty members were doing, and that they had tried some of these ideas in their courses.

However, in general there was a very negative reaction to the idea of portfolio review in this department, especially for evaluative (accountability) purposes. Faculty did not see it as very useful, they had a great deal of difficulty determining what to say in their portfolios, and continually expressed great concern over what criteria could or would be used to evaluate them. They felt that if you were going to evaluate faculty members, then you needed to have explicit criteria for that evaluation. If you have explicit criteria faculty members "will simply write to these criteria" and you will "ritualize" the evaluation process. If

faculty take these definitions seriously, you will ultimately "trivialize" teaching. Also, they saw specifying what was to be considered effective teaching, and what and how things should be taught, as an encroachment on academic freedom. They did not feel they got much value out of constructing portfolios, especially for the time invested, and that it did not reflect their ideas about good teaching. As one faculty member stated " the substantive, creative engagement in teaching is hard to get from portfolios". Comments from peers to be of use needed to be constructive and specific and most faculty members found comments made by peers to be too general to be of use. In addition, several faculty members felt that peers being critical of each other would undermine morale in the department. Using portfolio review for improvement purposes with comments shared only with the individual faculty member could give faculty members some good ideas about teaching, however; "you could get at those things through other mechanisms". Most faculty did not feel they could judge other faculty members portfolios, and saw most differences in teaching as a matter of "style". Whether they felt they could judge differences in quality or not, almost all faculty members felt uncomfortable judging other faculty for evaluative purposes.

When I explored alternative ways of conducting portfolio review for improvement or accountability, these later sentiments were expressed by faculty in all three departments. Faculty would welcome the opportunity to review each others teaching and felt comfortable making carefully worded constructive "suggestions" for improvement, but they felt the responsibility for being evaluative was the chairperson's. They felt that many of the differences they had observed or would observe in the ways faculty members taught was a matter of "style" and that qualitative differences were difficult to assess. Also, they were not sure what they would get out of reviewing portfolios from content areas other than their own. Aside from the obvious concern for differences in concepts being taught, they were unsure that alternative methods they had observed would work in their discipline. This concern was expressed both within and across academic disciplines.

Untenured faculty members were very uncomfortable with being critical of senior faculty for accountability or improvement purposes, but were very interested in seeing what senior faculty did in their teaching. Also, they were uncomfortable with having their portfolios reviewed for accountability or improvement out of fear of criticism or looking bad.

Faculty members varied on how much they talked about teaching with each other. More than half indicated that they did not talk about teaching with each other. Of those that did, the focus of their conversations was on methodological problems of how to improve writing assignments, deal with televised courses etc., and few had ever discussed their basic ideas about teaching with a colleague. Discussions about teaching occurred in informal

settings. Formal discussions about teaching within departments focused on curriculum issues.

Was portfolio review Practical?

Faculty members' typical reaction to this question was that it was not. They saw it as taking too much time for the benefit they felt they had derived from going through the process. Typically, faculty members spent two to four hours preparing their portfolios for each course, and some spent up to a day. Most of this time was spent in gathering materials or pulling them from computer files. The time spent in preparing reflective statements and relating their teaching objectives to teaching practices was not ascertained, but it seemed not to be a major part of the task for most faculty. When asked how much time it would take to update their portfolios for future evaluations they typically reported that it would take about an hour. The greatest amount of time expenditure came in reviewing other faculty members portfolios. Most faculty members did not do an extensive analysis of each others' portfolios. Chairs saw analyzing each faculty members portfolios on an yearly basis as an extremely time consuming task. Faculty members and chairs frequently expressed the idea that in preparing portfolios faculty could misrepresent what they did, or simply write it out according a certain guideline or some statement about good teaching, and not actually be teaching that way. They thought preparing portfolios might even take time away from teaching and be counterproductive. Instances were cited where faculty had good portfolios but were known to do a poor job in the classroom and vise versa.

Was portfolio review worthwhile?

Most faculty members were undecided on whether the process of portfolio review was worthwhile. Doing the reflective part of the portfolio was indicated as of most benefit. Faculty who had served on promotion and tenure committees frequently stated that they thought having junior faculty include reflective statements about their teaching would be very useful and help "contextualize" their teaching for promotion and tenure decisions. Almost all faculty members felt that it did provide information that was different from that provided in student ratings and that having more sources of information about teaching provided for a better evaluation. They did see a lot of value in reviewing peers' portfolios but questioned how long they would gain new information after they had gone through that process a couple of times. Going through the portfolio review process had not captured their ideas about good teaching, and they found it most deficient in capturing the dynamic, creative, interactive aspects of teaching. This was in reference to both planning what to teach and the process of instructional delivery and interaction with students. Also, they questioned how much benefit it would have for gaining good ideas for the kinds of concepts and skills they taught in their

particular academic disciplines.

ANALYSIS OF MAJOR CONCERNS

Our first mistake was to proceed too fast and to have placed the use of portfolio evaluation in an accountability context. Despite the fact that this was a faculty senate reviewed and recommended evaluation process, faculty found themselves in a situation of having to do something that could potentially affect them greatly and felt that it had been unfairly imposed on them. They had not had the opportunity to gain "ownership" of the process. They felt threatened and lacked clear information on how best to proceed. While Seldin (1993b) recommends that faculty become involved in the process and learn to resolve the issues associated with portfolio review, they had insufficient guidance to do so readily. There was a failure to recognize the flexible and individualized nature of portfolio review, both in preparing portfolios and using them for evaluation. The immediate concern was for specifiable criteria, coupled with a perception that doing so would misrepresent what teaching was about. Another concern expressed by faculty was that portfolios could not capture effective teaching as they defined it, especially the dynamic and interactive aspects of it. Best practices (Wolf, 1991) and innovations were not the focal points for developing portfolios and there was a concern for being comprehensive rather than selective in what went into their portfolios. Little concrete advise or guidance was available, and the overall holistic notion of "a union of insufficiencies" (Shulman, 1988) was not a perspective used in constructing or evaluating portfolios. Placing portfolio review in the context of accountability evaluation had forced faculty members to focus on meeting prescribed standards or standards they perceived as vague or inappropriate rather than on how they might use the process to improve their teaching.

The use of a mentoring or other collaborative relationships in preparing portfolios would have been extremely helpful. Mentors could have been used to foster dialogue about teaching goals and ideas and helped the faculty member put these in writing (Annis, 1993). Seldin (1993b) suggests using trained mentors and/or mentors from other departments for providing the structure to clarify instructional intents, identify how those are manifested in the teaching of the course and for matching that to evidence of its effect on student learning in a non-threatening context. The use of mentors from other departments would seem especially appropriate for untenured faculty. Experienced mentors from other departments could help untenured faculty make their best case for effective teaching while sharing ideas for improvement.

Another concern voiced by faculty is that portfolios do not capture their individual approaches to teaching, especially the interactive aspects of teaching. While mentoring could do much to alleviate that shortcoming, it still seems to fall short. Video

tapping and classroom visitation by peers has been offered as a way of doing that, and could certainly be used, but this would call for fairly sophisticated and time consuming interaction between the faculty member and a knowledgeable mentor.

Capturing the creative, dynamic aspects of teaching not only in delivering instruction but in planning and reflecting on teaching is difficult. Much of the means of displaying this would be through faculty self report focusing on how much time and effort they have expended on reworking and improving their courses. The most impressive thing I found in interviewing these faculty, that I had not anticipated, was the time and effort they expended in reading background material, deciding what to teach, critically analyzing how to teach that material, and critically analyzing how well it worked. Most of that analysis occurred informally in periods of self reflection and while interacting with students. I tried to capture that process in the characterizations in the early part of the findings of this paper. The very heart of effective teaching emanates from this ever evolving, reflective, transformational process Shulman (1989) calls "pedagogical content knowledge". Other than documentary self report evidence, how are faculty going to be able to relate this to enhanced student learning?

Edgerton's, Hutchings' and Quinlan's (1991) approach to the problem of capturing the transformational and interactive aspects of teaching, building on the work of Shulman and his associates, is through presenting "episodes" of reflective teaching. Teachers present a context for a particular area of concern, reflect on what they have attempted to do about the problem, and relate it to student work. These "contextualized" episodes of teaching try to capture how the content knowledge of the teacher is transformed by the teacher in interaction with a particular group of students in a particular teaching situation. Such episodes of teaching could be accumulated over time to paint a picture of effective teaching. Using such a process and procedure to document effective teaching would seem to more closely approximate what faculty members actually do in their teaching than any other procedure currently available.

To implement such a process faculty members in departments could interact with a trained mentor to develop these episodes. However, this would require a sophisticated level of expertise on the part of mentors. Translating the transformation processes of teaching is difficult. Success depends on the motivation for faculty members to participate and mentors to engage in such interactive processes. The process itself of reflecting on teaching stimulated by preparing portfolios seems to have enough intrinsic value to motivate many faculty members to participate and to continue to engage in the portfolio review process (Seldin, 1993a). Faculty members' accounts of why they became teachers ("hooked on teaching") supports the notion that the intrinsic value

of teaching is very motivating. If the portfolio review process can be usefully tied to their personal definitions of effective teaching then sufficient motivation may result from constructing portfolios to engage in the process.

The role of faculty members in the same department is another concern. Shulman (1992) notes that only attending to generic pedagogical principles fails to capitalize on what communities of teachers learn or could learn from each other. A possible solution to the problem is to have colleagues in the same academic disciplines act as mentors for each other. This would stimulate focused dialogue about teaching and capitalize on the interest of faculty in seeing what each other is doing in teaching situations that are similar enough to their own content area to have some potential applicability. While generic principles of instruction are helpful, being knowledgeable in a content area is critical for generating content specific pedagogical knowledge and exploring the issues of what to teach and why. Even so, problems of the relevance of the feedback provided by mentors in portfolio review may persist. Faculty in the same general academic discipline frequently questioned whether the ideas for teaching content in other similar courses would be useful for their courses.

Criteria to be used in evaluating portfolios was a major concern of faculty. Issues surrounding the development of criteria for evaluating portfolios are complex and unresolved. Edgerton, Hutchings and Quinlan (1991) suggest that criteria be developed for the critical tasks of teaching: planning and preparation, actual teaching, evaluating student learning and providing feedback and keeping up with the professional field in areas related to teaching performance. Seldin (1993b) suggests that teaching objectives be related to what is done in the course and that evidence of the effectiveness of these practices be referenced and documented in the teaching portfolio for the critical tasks of teaching just noted. He offers several suggestions for the kinds of information that might be provided to substantiate claims of effective teaching in each of these areas. Other approaches to developing criteria have focused on examining the institutional goals and the goals of the department in which the faculty member teaches and insuring that these are addressed in the faculty members portfolio. Portfolios are evaluated holistically, and the reults of that evaluation are reported as numerical ratings or as narrative comments.

Most faculty members did not feel that they could make qualitative judgements on the dimensions of teaching noted above, and even those that felt they could did not feel comfortable doing so. They felt that differences were a matter of "style" or personal preference. Furthermore, some of the most important objectives of instruction, such as developing thinking skills, fostering multiple viewpoints in students, challenging their stereotypes, or enriching their appreciation of others are

difficult to readily change and we do not have adequate measures to show those changes. Some of these objectives are best justified as being of value in and of themselves, and difficulty in relating these to demonstrable changes in student learning may subvert attention to them in instruction. At this point in the development of portfolio review, evaluations of teaching portfolios for accountability purposes is probably best left up to individuals who have to make those judgements such as chairs and those faculty members serving on promotion and tenure or awards committees.

Differences between the mission and formal pedagogical training in the departments suggests that decisions about the purpose for using portfolios, what to include in them, and who might be involved in the process should be made at the departmental, programmatic, or even individual level. In departments such as accounting and dental hygiene where there is a common set of concerns, and a focus on professional preparation, and faculty are accepting of these common concerns, preparation of portfolio for purposes of accountability might be appropriate. Preparation of portfolios here could still be used to stimulate dialogue about effective teaching, capitalize on the benefit of putting these in writing, and help individual faculty members or the department as a whole make a case for effective teaching.

Further considerations here would include whether the faculty members themselves could act as mentors to formulate effective teaching practices, or would find an outside consultant more beneficial. In the case of dental hygiene, the typical background training of faculty members in educational and adult learning theory would suggest they could profitably conduct this process on their own. Accounting, while incorporating many of the same processes and ideas in their teaching, might benefit from having help in translating or examining these ideas with knowledgeable outside consultants.

Faculty in the sociology department have some common concerns of what to teach in general education courses but have diverse perspectives on what is important to teach in most of their courses. Also, they see the use of portfolios for accountability as restrictive and a threat to academic freedom. The rich and varied approaches to teaching used by faculty members of this department might best be represented through "episodes" of teaching that might evolve out of an evaluation process focusing on using portfolio review for improvement. This could be accomplished by having mentors from within or outside the department work with each other to construct episodes of teaching, and using peer review for providing feedback only to the faculty member. If issues of accountability later arise, faculty of that department could present a case for providing rich, varied and insightful experiences for students through examples of teaching episodes or a restructuring of their portfolios. Schackelford (1993) suggests that faculty may want to keep two kinds of portfolios, one for

"their eyes only" for improvement, and another that could be presented for others to evaluate for accountability.

Non-tenured faculty may find the process of constructing portfolios very useful. Seldin (1993b) notes that tenure and promotion committees react favorably to reviewing well structured and substantiated cases for effective teaching. Providing reflective statements about teaching helps to contextualize and focus the faculty members teaching accomplishments for review by tenure and promotion committees.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Whatever way departments choose to conduct portfolio review, there needs to be a recognition that it is a very time consuming process to construct, and especially to evaluate, portfolios. If faculty do not see the benefit of constructing portfolios or do not want to construct portfolios, it seems ill advised to force them to do so. The motivation for participating in portfolio review comes from participating in the process and what faculty get from it. Faculty members can best evaluate that after they have attempted to use portfolio review. Administrative encouragement and support is essential to provide the motivation to try out portfolio review, and to provide the resources for some form of mentoring. If interest in teaching enhancement projects arise from that process, university level resources need to be available to respond to those interests.

Implementing a system of portfolio review is difficult, and the practical suggestions available from Seldin and his associates (1991, 1993b); Edgerton, Hutchings, and Quinlan (1991); and Shulman and his associates working at Stanford are very important to successful implementation of a portfolio review process. Millis (1991) provides an excellent discussion and set of references for dealing with the kinds of issues faculty raise in constructing and reviewing teaching portfolios. I found the information gained from participating in the recent national symposium on portfolio review very helpful for interpreting what went wrong. The major benefit for improving instruction comes from the dialogue stimulated by portfolio construction and review, and from the requirement that processes and outcomes of effective teaching be captured in writing. Seldin (1993b) and Edgerton, Hutchings, and Quinlan (1991) note effective use of portfolios develops out of working with them in particular contexts and for particular purposes and there is no one formula for successful implementation.

Seldin (1990) and others (Edgerton, Hutchings & Quinlan, 1991) see the need for making a better case for effective teaching as a necessary response to the winds of change in higher education and the demand for better accountability. Teaching portfolios, while not perfect, can present a better case for effective teaching while preserving the individual, complex and transformational nature of

teaching, than any other existing form of evaluation. This would seem to be best accomplished by letting the process of portfolio review evolve out of the unique concerns of academic disciplines, leaving the form that portfolios might take flexible, and avoiding using them for accountability purposes too early on in the process.

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